

THE DEATH OF TOMMY.

Virginia Hospitality Could Not Be Disregarded Too Lightly.

The south has always been known for its hospitality, and nowhere has this quality been more religiously maintained than in Virginia. Unfortunately the war made sad havoc with the Virginian's resources, but his old time open heartedness has never altered.

Some years ago a friend of mine traveling in the lower portion of that state stopped for a few hours with old acquaintances and remained for tea. An occasion of this kind in Virginia calls invariably for the favorite dish of the south—the fried chicken.

Alas! there was but one young chicken on the place, and that one a pet. It had been left an orphan by its mother at a very early age, and, like Pip in Charles Dickens' "Great Expectations," had been brought up by hand. The children called it Tommy, and were very fond of it, while Tommy in turn was attached to the children.

The matter was a very serious one, and a family consultation was held. Virginia hospitality could not be lightly disregarded, and it was decided that poor Tommy must become the sacrifice. My friend of course knew nothing of the tragedy that was being enacted for his comfort, and when tea was served regarded the plate of nicely browned chicken with contemplative joy.

Soon, however, he became aware that something was amiss. An air of silent sorrow pervaded the little family group usually so gay, and the children took nothing on their plates. The chicken was passed, but with the exception of my friend no one partook. Selecting a juicy looking drumstick, he fixed it with his fork, and cutting off a choice bit conveyed it to his mouth.

At this there was a sudden and heart breaking howl from one of the little boys, "Oh, mamma, mamma, he's eating up our Tommy!"

Thereupon the other children mingled their voices in a wild wailing, and the older members burst into uncontrollable laughter in which, as the truth dawned upon him, my friend joined.

Then there came explanations, more laughter and tears, and adjustments all around.

Poor Tommy could not be restored to life, but he was buried under a big apple tree with appropriate ceremonies.—Albert B. Paine in Harper's Young People.

A Ball of Fire Makes a Visit.

A very singular story is told concerning the vagaries of one mass of globe lightning. A tailor in the Rue St. Jacques, in the neighborhood of the Val de Grace, was getting his dinner one day during a thunderstorm when he heard a loud clap, and soon the chimney board fell down, and a globe of fire as big as a child's head came out quietly and moved slowly about the room at a small height above the floor. The spectator, in conversation afterward with M. Babinet, of the Academie des Sciences, said it looked like a good sized kitten rolled up into a ball and moving without showing its paws. It was bright and shining, yet he felt no sensation of heat. The globe came near his feet, but by moving them gently aside he avoided the contact.

After trying several excursions in different directions it rose vertically to the height of his head—which he threw back to prevent it touching him—steered toward a hole in the chimney above the mantelpiece, and made its way into the flue. Shortly afterward—"when he supposed it had had time to reach the top," the tailor said—there was a dreadful explosion, which destroyed the upper part of the chimney and threw the fragments on to the roofs of some adjoining buildings, which they broke through.—Chambers' Journal.

A Theory About Man's Beard.
There is a theory favored by the disciples of Darwin that the beard is merely the survival of a primitive decoration. Man, according to this view, was originally as hairy as the opossum itself, but as he rolled down the ages he wore the hair off in patches by sleeping on his sides and sitting against a tree. Of course the hair of the dog is not worn off in this way, but a great theory is not to be set aside by an objection so trifling. By and by our ancestors "awoke to the consciousness that they were patchy and spotty," and resolving to "live down" all hair that was not ornamental, they with remarkable unanimity seem to have fixed on the eyebrows, the mustache and—unfortunately, as the self scrapers mostly think—the beard as being all that was worth preserving of the primitive covering.—English Illustrated Magazine.

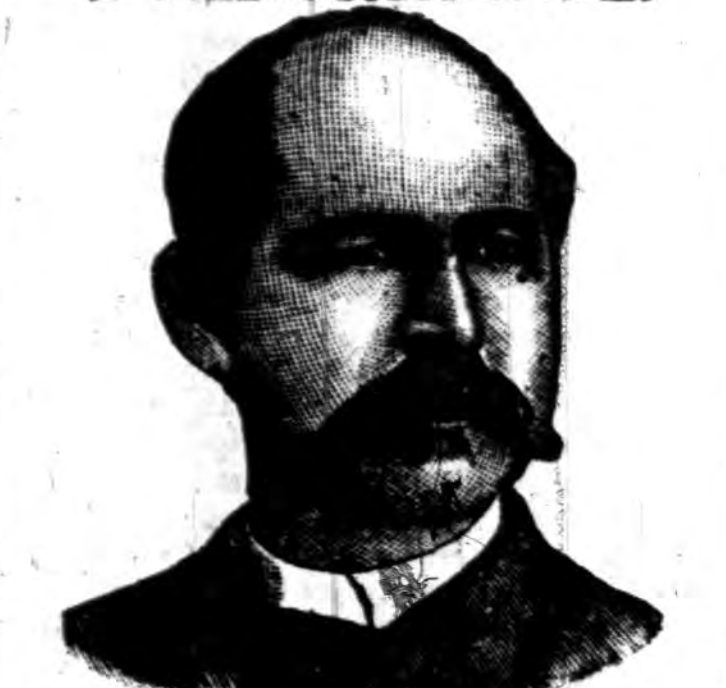
Snap Shots at Royalty.
King George is to Aix what the Prince of Wales is to Homburg. He is remarkable for extreme assurance, tempered with reserve, and wears his hat slightly on the side of his head as he strides along the streets, looking straight at people as if to invite them to get out of his way. He is an habitué of the casino and the cardrooms. On alighting from his carriage yesterday a number of photographers ran up to take snap shots at him.

Seeing this the king good naturedly stopped and "stood fire," turning his face toward them. On returning to his carriage when the visit was over he did the same, saying aloud when he thought they ought to have done, "Ca y est" (It's all right, is it not?)—a remark that elicited great laughter.—London News.

Three Views of Mars.
M. Flammarion, the French astronomer, regards it as very probable that the dark areas of Mars are water and the bright ones land. Professor Schaeberle's observations with the greatest telescope in the world (the Lick) under the best possible conditions, lead him to precisely opposite conclusions. Mr. Brett (the English artist astronomer) doubts if land and water exist on Mars at all, and gives good reasons for deciding that the planet is in a heated state—as we suppose Jupiter to be, for example.—Professor E. S. Holden in Forum.

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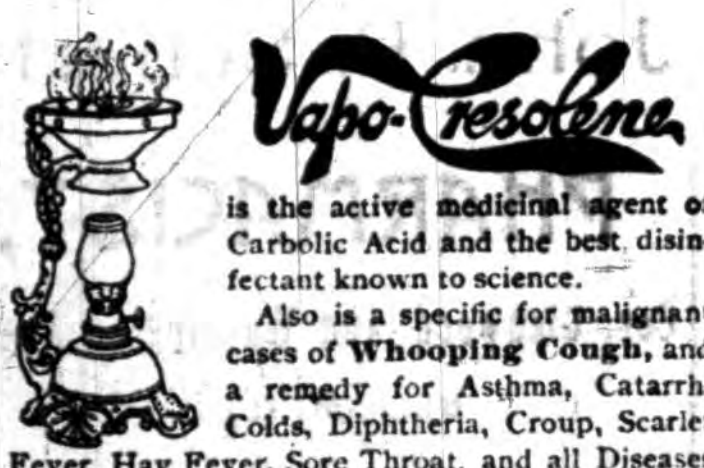
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